

## January-June 2013 Reading List

### **The Sea is My Brother: By, Jack Kerouac**

**Meeting: January 8, 2013 @ 7 pm (This meeting is scheduled on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday)**

In the spring of 1943, during a stint in the Merchant Marine, twenty-one-year old Jack Kerouac set out to write his first novel. Working diligently day and night to complete it by hand, he titled it *The Sea Is My Brother*. Now, nearly seventy years later, its long-awaited publication provides fascinating details and insight into the early life and development of an American literary icon. Written seven years before *The Town and The City* officially launched his writing career, *The Sea Is My Brother* marks a pivotal point in which Kerouac began laying the foundations for his pioneering method and signature style. A clear precursor to such landmark works as *On the Road*, *The Dharma Bums*, and *Visions of Cody*, it is an important formative work that bears all the hallmarks of classic Kerouac: the search for spiritual meaning in a materialistic world, spontaneous travel as the true road to freedom, late nights in bars and apartments engaged in intense conversation, the desperate urge to escape from society, and the strange, terrible beauty of loneliness.

### **Paris Wife, by: Paula McLain**

**Meeting: February 5, 2013 @ 7 pm**

Meeting through mutual friends in Chicago, Hadley is intrigued by brash "beautiful boy" Ernest Hemingway, and after a brief courtship and small wedding, they take off for Paris, where Hadley makes a convincing transformation from an overprotected child to a game and brave young woman who puts up with impoverished living conditions and shattering loneliness to prop up her husband's career.

### **The Jane Austen Book Club: by, Karen Joy Fowler**

**Meeting: March 5, 2013 @ 7 pm**

Six Californians join to discuss Jane Austen's novels. Over the six months they meet, marriages are tested, affairs begin, unsuitable arrangements become suitable, and love happens. With her finely sighted eye for the frailties of human behavior and her finely tuned ear for the absurdities of social intercourse, Fowler has never been wittier nor her characters more appealing. The result is a delicious dissection of modern relationships. Dedicated Austenites will delight in unearthing the echoes of Austen that run through the novel, but most readers will simply enjoy the vision and voice that, despite two centuries of separation, unite two great writers of brilliant social comedy.

### **One Hundred Years of Solitude: Gabriel Garcia Marquez**

**Meeting: April 2, 2013 @ 7 pm**

One Hundred Years of Solitude chronicles, through the course of a century, life in mythic village of Macondo and the lives of six Buendia generations. As babies are born and the world's "great inventions" are introduced into Macondo, the village grows and becomes more and more subject to the workings of the outside world, to its politics and progress, and to history itself. And the Buendias and their fellow Macondons advance in years, experience, and wealth . . . until madness, corruption, and death enter their homes. From the gypsies who visit Macondo during its earliest years to the gringos who build the banana plantation, from the "enormous Spanish galleon" discovered far from the sea to the arrival of the railroad, electricity, and the telephone, Gabriel Garcia Marquez's classic novel weaves a magical tapestry of the everyday and the fantastic, the humdrum and the miraculous, life and death, tragedy and comedy--a tapestry in which the noble, the ridiculous, the beautiful, and the tawdry all contribute to an astounding vision of human life and death, a full measure of humankind's inescapable potential and reality.

### **Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a boy soldier, by: Ishmael Beah**

**Meeting: May 7, 2013 @ 7 pm**

My new friends have begun to suspect I haven't told them the full story of my life. "Why did you leave Sierra Leone?" "Because there is a war." "You mean, you saw people running around with guns and shooting each other?" "Yes, all the time." "Cool." I smile a little. "You should tell us about it sometime." "Yes, sometime." This is how wars are fought now: by children, hopped-up on drugs and wielding AK-47s. Children have become soldiers of choice. In the more than fifty conflicts going on worldwide, it is estimated that there are some 300,000 child soldiers. Ishmael Beah used to be one of them. What is war like through the eyes of a child soldier? How does one become a killer? How does one stop? Child soldiers have been profiled by journalists, and novelists have struggled to imagine their lives. But until now, there has not been a first-person account from someone who came through this hell and survived. In *A Long Way Gone*, Beah, now twenty-five years old, tells a riveting story: how at the age of twelve, he fled attacking rebels and wandered a land rendered unrecognizable by violence. By thirteen, he'd been picked up by the government army, and Beah, at heart a gentle boy, found that he was capable of truly terrible acts. This is a rare and mesmerizing account, told with real literary force and heartbreaking honesty.

### **American Wife, by: Curtis Sittenfeld**

**Meeting: June 5, 2012 @ 7 pm**

A kind, bookish only child born in the 1940s, Alice Lindgren has no idea that she will one day end up in the White House, married to the president. In her small Wisconsin hometown, she learns the virtues of politeness, but a tragic accident when she is seventeen shatters her identity and changes the trajectory of her life. More than a decade later, when the charismatic son of a powerful Republican family sweeps her off her feet, she is surprised to find herself admitted into a world of privilege. And when her husband unexpectedly becomes governor and then president, she discovers that she is married to a man she both loves and fundamentally disagrees with - and that her private beliefs increasingly run against her public persona. As her husband's presidency enters its second term, Alice must confront contradictions years in the making and face questions nearly impossible to answer.